

to recount the foolish legend that Arius wrote down his real opinions on paper, which he carried under his arm, and so could truly swear that he " held " the sentiments he had written. Arius then demanded to be admitted to communion with the Church at Constantinople, as public testimony to his orthodoxy, and the Patriarch Alexander was ordered to receive him. Alexander was a feeble old man of ninety-eight but he did not lack moral courage. He told the Emperor that his conscience would not allow him to offer the sacraments to one whom, in spite of the recent declarations of the bishops at Jerusalem, he still regarded as an arch-heretic. He was not troubled, says Socrates,* at the thought of his own deposition; what he feared was the subversion of the principles of the Faith, of which he regarded himself as the constituted guardian. Locking himself up within his church—the Church of St. Eirene—he lay prostrate before the high altar and remained there in earnest supplication for many days and nights. And the burden of his prayer was that if Arius's opinions were right he (Alexander) might not live to see him enter the church to receive the sacrament, but that, if he himself held the true Faith, Arius the impious might be punished for his impiety. The aged Bishop was still calling upon Heaven to judge between Arius and himself and declare the truth by some manifest sign, when the time appointed for Arius to be received into communion was at hand. Arius was on his way to St. Eirene.

* Socrates, i., 37.